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A well-wisher on your side to "Dear Sir" (Undated)

Author Unknown

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Compl. In return add

Mr. James Meredith:

Dear Sir:

This letter is from a white man who has lived in both the North and the South and is in sympathy with your demand for the right to attend a state-supported school.

Your statement that you wanted to attend Ole Miss for the purpose of getting an education and not as a guinea pig for an integration effort was a fine statement; but now that you have objected to the Negro soldiers being separated from the group on police duty at Ole Miss seems to belie the statement about your wanting an equal opportunity and may easily give the impression that you are there to fight the whole segregation battle. I sincerely wish you success in your effort to get an education knowing that Negro schools in the south are inclined to pass students along with lower grades than are usually required in the white schools, and that may make it a little difficult for you to keep up with the class unless you are naturally a good student.

But I do think it is for your own good and for the good of the race that you stick to your expressed aim of getting an education.

According to newspaper reports, the Negro soldiers on duty were made the butt of ridicule by the people involved in the fracas at Ole Miss, and to keep the colored boys on duty there would have likely led to more insults and perhaps an outbreak of more shooting and more deaths and would have given the Mississippi citizens more of an argument for not admitting Negro students to the white schools. The colored soldiers were humiliated by the remarks of the students or rabble-rousers who were causing trouble and were not free to fight back as they might have done if they were not a part of the military where they have to work as a group and do as ordered.

In recent conversations with white people of the better middle class in Mississippi I've been told that they thought integration for education was the only logical solution of the long-disputed wrangle over schools. So you have many intelligent people on your side. Perhaps in another generation you will hear the campaigning politicians promising to do a whole lot for the colored people just as they are now promising to do a lot for the white citizens of the state.

So I think it would be to your advantage to get your education and wait until after graduation to do any campaigning for another cause such as integration in the military forces. It was just to avoid greater abuse by the students that the colored boys were removed from the police detail. Many of the service men on duty there now are Mississippi men who may be doing something which they would rather not do, but they are acting under orders just as any service man should do.

In a recent conversation with a Mississippi ex-service man, I asked his opinion on the feasibility of integration in the schools and his reply was something like this: "I've fought beside the Negro, ate beside him, and slept beside him; so I don't see why I couldn't sit beside him in school." That statement was made by a white young man who is going to go places and have influence in future years.

Sincerely, a well-wisher on your side.